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The MASTER

Taken up from the

Sons of the Prophets.

A SERMON

Preached at *Cambridge*

Upon the **Sudden** DEATH

OF THE

REVEREND & LEARNED

JOHN LEVERETT.

President of *Harvard College.*

By *Benjamin Colman,*

Paſtor of a Church in *Boſton.*

II. Kings iii. 11. Eliſha *the Son of* Shaphat, *which pour'd water on the hands of* Elijah.
Geneſis xxvii. 2. *I know not the day of my death.*

BOSTON: Printed for *Samuel Gerriſh.*
1724.

The *Master* taken up

From the

Sons of the Prophets.

II. KINGS II. 3.

AND the Sons of the Prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it, hold you your peace.

THE day was now come, the famous day, of *Elijah*'s leaving the world, and being taken up into Heaven. It seems to have been revealed to him by God some time before that he should not see death; not go the way of all the earth. He kept this wondrous Event a Secret in his own breast, and did not so much as let his dear *Elisha* into it. The humble Saint was not exalted under the

the Revelation, nor deſired any Witneſs of the diſtinguiſhing favour of God to him. He propoſed therefore unto *Eliſha* his tarrying at *Gilgal*, for (ſaid he) *the Lord hath ſent me to Bethel.* But God had revealed to *Eliſha* the Secret which *Elijah* would not. He therefore ſware to him in a fervent holy zeal, (with equal wiſdom, piety and devotion) That *as the Lord liv'd he would not leave him.* So they went down together to *Bethel.*—— At *Bethel* there was a *School of the Prophets*, or one of the *Colleges of Iſrael*; where (ſays One) " men were train'd up and imploy'd in the " Exerciſes of religion and devotion, and whither " good people reſorted to ſolemnize the appoint- " ed Feaſts with praying and hearing, when " they had not the convenience for Sacrifices & " Incenſe: And thus there was a proviſion made " by the care of Heaven for the keeping up of " Religion in Iſrael, when the ten Tribes were " gone into a general Apoſtaſy.—— To be ſure *Bethel* now needed this School of the Prophets to be in it, for one of *Jeroboams Calves* was ſet up there; and no doubt the School was a ſtanding Witneſs againſt the Idolatrous Worſhip there. At *Jerico* there was another of theſe Schools; a place as unworthy of ſuch an honour as *Bethel* was, for " it was built in defiance of the Divine " *Curſe.*

NOW before God would take up *Elijah* he ſends him to viſit theſe Schools; " theſe Semi- " naries of religion and learning; that he might once more pray with and bleſs them, inſtruct & charge them, before his tranſlation. Probably he had

had *presided* over them while he liv'd, as *Elisha* did after his Ascent, It may be (says one) "he "had been Instrumental in the founding them. But to be sure he was well known there, and highly reverenc'd in his Visitations. He came in the Authority of a Prophet, and was receiv'd in the Name of the Lord.

THE *Sons* of the Prophets were the *Scholars* that dwelt and studied and worship'd in the Colleges of *Israel*. *Samuel* in his day had the Inspection and Instruction of them, and *Elisha* in his time. God rais'd up many *Prophets* to Israel out of these Schools. And he sometimes made his Revelations to the pious *Students* there. Therefore were they properly called *the Sons of the Prophets*. Prophets were their Masters and Presidents, and the Spirit of Prophesy rested upon many of them.

AT this time God revealed his purpose of translating *Elijah* to some of them. They therefore came forth to *Elisha* upon his arrival at *Bethel*, and say to him in the words of my Text, *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to day?*

IT appears by this that they themselves had the knowledge of it. They speak of it as Prophets well might and ought under the Revelations of God to them, as a thing certain & past all doubt. They suppose that God had not hid it from *Elisha*, since he had reveal'd it unto them. Yet they saw him so compos'd and sedate, while they themselves were under a more visible surprise, that it gave 'em a kind of sudden doubt

whither he had the knowledge of it. In that caſe they find themſelves mov'd, and think it a duty of love to him, to inform him of it. Or a natural *Curioſity* and religious *Expectation* of ſo rare and wondrous an Event led 'em to enquire of him concerning it. It might ſerve to the ſtrengthning their own & his faith. They were in *haſt* to vent themſelves to him upon it: they *came forth* and ſpake to him of it; full of the matter.

BUT let us mind how they ſpake of the *Prophet* and of his Tranſlation. 1. They reverently call him *Maſter*; Eliſha's Maſter and theirs. He was a venerable and aged Teacher from God, and had Authority and Government over them. It was an honour to *Eliſha* to ſerve before him, and to *pour water upon his hands*. Yea it became as great and good a man as *Obadiah* to fall down on his face before him, and to ſay, *Art thou that my Lord Elijah.*

2. THEY ſpeak of *the Lord*'s taking him away. Who but the Lord, the Lord of Hoſts could do this? He only has his way in the *whirlwind*, and makes the clouds his chariots, and rides upon the wings of the wind. He took him up by the miniſtry and hands of *Angels*: they are his Miniſters and flames of fire: they now appeared as *Chariots and horſes of fire.* So we read of the Tranſlation of *Enoch*, that *God took him.* It is ſo likewiſe in mens leaving the world by death, and in the deceaſe of the moſt inferior perſon as well as the Prophet: God takes them away.

3. THEY

3. THEY ſpeak of his being *taken from their Head.* He was their Maſter, and ſo *above* them, was placed *over* them by Providence. They had been us'd to ſit as Scholars *at his feet*, while he taught 'em. So we read of *Paul* that he had been bro't up *at the feet of Gamaliel.* To our day the Teacher uſually ſits in a chair raiſed a little above their ſeats who come to learn of him, as well to put honour on him that teaches, as for the convenience of their hearing him.

4. THEY ſpeak of God's taking away Elijah *that day* from them. The time was *fixed* to a day and hour, and it was *ſudden* upon them. It's likely that it was reveal'd to 'em *but that very day*, wherein it was done.

But laſtly, THE ſingular thing here was that the thing & the time was ſo well *known* : known to *Elijah*, known to *Eliſha*, known in the *Schools*. As I ſaid before, God had revealed it. He would not do this great thing and not reveal it to his ſervants *the Prophets.* It was meet (ſince it pleaſed God) that *Elijah* ſhould know it, that he might do his laſt work, and meekly meet ſo great an honour done him. In this he was *a Type of Chriſt* who knew both the day and hour of his Crucifixion & Aſcention : *Joh.* 13. 1. *Now when Jeſus knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father,* ——— It was meet (by the will of God) that *Eliſha* ſhould know of his Maſters aſcenſion, that he might attend his ſteps, keep cloſe to him, ſee him aſcend, and receive his parting Bleſſing & inherit his Prophetic Spirit. It was good for the *Schools*

that they knew before hand of their Maſters taking up, that they alſo might be witneſſes of it to the Church of God, and that their faith in a bleſſed Immortality, of body and ſoul together in heaven, might be confirmed. --- But yet it was a *new* and ſtrange thing in the Providence of God, and as ſuch it is ſpoken of in my text, that any of them ſhould know any thing of the matter ; the Lord's taking away their maſter from their head that day : *Knoweſt thou* that the Lord will do it ?

I come now to *Eliſha*'s Anſwer, *I know it, hold you your peace.* No wonder that he the favourite Scholar *knew it*, when the reſt did. --- But what means he by bidding them *hold their peace* ? --- There ſeems to have been a *modeſty* and decency, as well as *devotion* in his reſtraining them *now* from ſpeaking of it to him. *Elijah* had not himſelf ſpoken to him of it, nor had he preſum'd to ſpeak to *him* ; he therefore bid his Brethren be ſilent, and keep it to themſelves. The *eager* manner wherein they ſpake to him might diſcover that knowledge, which his maſters ſilence about the matter taught him to conceal. " Let " not my Maſter perceive that I underſtand any " thing of it : ſo Bp. *Patrick* on the place. It appear'd improper & unſeaſonable for them to be *whiſpering* to and enquiring of him *now*. They might talk it over hereafter. Now he would not have his Tho'ts *diſturbed* or diverted from the laſt words and actions of his Maſter. He " would have them be compoſed and *ſedate* as

" he

" he was, expecting and preparing for the Event " with awful silence and deep contemplation. He had more than enough *Work* to do to get and keep his own Soul in a meet posture for the parting hour and the parting blessing.

I come now to gather up some of the *Doctrinal Notes* or Observations; which the Words supply us with. And that I may accomodate my Discourse to the present *Audience*, and to the *Providence* that brings me hither, I shall rank my *Notes* in these two *Classes*;

1. SUCH as may more peculiarly respect the *Schools* and the *Sons of the Prophets*.

2. SUCH as may be of more common concern and use *to all of us*.

I. And first, THE *Schools* and the *Sons of learning* are instructed and admonished from my text how very much they ought to *set by the precious life*, and be *affected with the Decease* of such as God has made their wise *Masters* and pious *Teachers*. It ought greatly to be laid to heart by all the People of God, when God takes away the *Presidents* & Masters of their Colleges, but more especially ought the Sons and *Students* in them to mourn their own more immediate Bereavement; as affectionate and dutiful Children weep and are in bitterness when God takes away their loving and dear Parent and Father. As *Joseph fell upon his Father's face* as soon as he had given up the Ghost, and *wept* upon it and *kissed* it; so it should be here.

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THE *Sons of the Prophets* in my text ſpeak, 1. As they that *knew the worth* of the Ineſtimable life of their Maſter, and valued it at the higheſt price. They ſpeak as thoſe that wiſh'd and pray'd for his longer life, might it have pleaſed God; and as thoſe (we hope) that had well profited and improved by it. 2. They ſpeak as thoſe that were deeply affected with *their own and the publick loſs* in their Maſters Departure from them.

IT is true there was no *Death* in the caſe to Him: yet he was as much *taken away* from them as if only his happy Soul had been taken up. Altho' there was *Life and Immortality* bro't to light, both in Church and School, in their Maſters tranſlation; yet they were that day and on a ſudden to take a *final leave* of him, and well might they therefore *weep for themſelves*, being to ſee his heavenly face and hear his pleaſant awful voice no more. They could all with burſting hearts have joyn'd *Eliſha*'s Cry after him, now he was going up,--- *Our father, our father, the Chariots of Iſrael and the horſemen thereof.*

AND ſo it becomes the Sons of learning and knowledge, the Sons of virtue and religion, *the Children of light and of the reſurrection*, to mourn and improve the deaths of their learned and pious Maſters from time to time, as God takes them away from their head.

HERE I will juſt hint at a few *Leſſons*, the proper leſſon of the *Day*, which my text is full of.

1. THERE ought to be *Schools* and *Colleges*, and *Maſters* and *Tutors*, for the training up our Sons

Sons in ſacred Knowledge and uſeful Learning: And it is a great honour and happineſs to a People to have ſuch means of a religious and learned Education among them; for the furniture and accompliſhment of perſons from age to age for the ſervice of God's Sanctuary and alſo of the State: That in every ſucceeding Generation there may be Sons and Plants of renown growing up, to fill the beſt chairs of honour and ſervice.

2. SUCH Seminaries of religion and learning ſhould have the ſpecial care and love of *God's Miniſters*; their prayers and viſits, their inſpection and direction; and therefore *ſuch* ordinarily ought to be at their head, and betruſted with the Government of them.

3. THEREFORE Religion and ſacred Knowledge, the Doctrines, Precepts and Inſtitutions of God's Word; *the theory and practice of Godlineſs*, ought to be made the ſpecial Subject, Scope and End of the Inſtruction and Education in ſuch Societies: That they may be places of eminent virtue, ſobriety and good morals, and alſo of eminent piety, ſanctity and devotion; which is more than all humane literature, *Arts & Sciences*; theſe being but as humble hand maids to wait on & miniſter to the other as their miſtreſs & queen.

4. MY text ſhows us that the Inſpection, care and overſight of ſuch a Society is an *honour and truſt* worthy of the higheſt Prophets of the Lord; a *Samuel*, an *Elijah* or *Eliſha*; their wiſdom, authority, gravity & ſanctity; and that ſuch Men of God in ſuch poſts of ſervice, are to be moſt highly reverenc'd and *counted worthy of double honour*.

5. THE

5. THE Ministers of Religion, and all men of letters and piety, " as many as are going to hea-" ven themselves, should while they live & when " they are leaving the world ; be particularly concerned for *those whom they leave behind 'em* ; and who are rising up after them to fill their places by the will of God : And in a special manner our Schools and *Colleges* should be always on our hearts, and we should often visit them in our Spirits and in our affectionate prayers unto God for them, even to the *last day* and hours of our life.——So *Christ* the great Prophet loved *his own* unto the end, and the nearer his hour drew on the more he had them on his heart ; *Joh.* 17.11. *And now* I *am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee; Holy Father, keep through thy own name*, &c.

6 ON the other hand, When Prophets and holy Men of God *die*, Men of eminent Character and Service in the Church of Christ ; *the Schools* ought particularly to enquire into & mourn their departure from 'em. We may expect the Tears of the *Sons of the Prophets* in this case, if other eyes be dry, and that whoever are unconcerned and unaffected under such Providences, *they* will lay the same to heart and piously improve them.

7. And lastly. THE *Sons of the Prophets* are to hold themselves particularly admonished by my text, to be *exemplary in their Adorations of God and Submissions to him* under such their Bereavments : Exemplary in their *Silence*, however sudden and surprising the stroke may be upon

upon them; or how great ſoever their loſs may be, and deep their ſorrow: Exemplary in their *Humiliations*, and godly ſorrowing unto Repentance, under the mighty hand of God: Exemplary in their *Supplications* and cries to heaven after their aſcending Fathers, for the Reſt of the Spirit of light and grace upon themſelves: Exemplary in their *Enquiries* into the mind of God & the meaning of his Diſpenſation to them; in their enquiries into their own inſtant & ſpecial Duty, and how they ought to carry themſelves, ſo as to honour and pleaſe God. Exemplary in their *truſt* in God and expectations from him, for all thoſe ſupplies of Grace which they ſtand in abſolute need of, and for the repairing the breaches which he makes, in his moſt wiſe all-governing Providence: And finally, Exemplary each one in his proper ſtation in a proper *Activity* and preſent diligence, in what is reſpectively incumbent on us for the good of the bereaved Society; Accounting our ſelves called of God to exert our ſelves now, with humility and caution for the common weal, ſecurity and peace of the widowed *Academy*. For indeed, as after the death of *Moſes* the ſervant of the Lord, the Lord ſpake unto *Joſhua*, Moſes Miniſter, ſaying, *Moſes my ſervant is dead, now therefore ariſe Thou*; So when God takes away the *Head* of a Kingdom, a Province or a College, or of any Society greater or leſs, He always calls upon the next ſurvivours in Inſpection, Authority and Government, to exert themſelves in their re-

spective stations and to unite their powers for the common good of it.

THESE are some of the *lessons* and instructions which the *Schools* and *Sons of the Prophets* may and should learn from what is related in my text.-- And O that it might please the *Eternal Spirit* to seal up Instruction to us under the present dark and awful Providence in the sudden death of our *President* and common Father. May *He* teach us (for none teacheth like him) to discern his mind and receive his will, with a filial reverence and religious subjection to Him, as *the Father of Spirits*. O that the fruits of this grievous affliction may be peaceable and joyous to us, sanctifying and saving, happy and blessed, and honorary to God from us.—— Our *School* is to day turn'd into the School of affliction, and the lesson we have to learn is, to live instantly, earnestly and diligently to God, as those (however young and hail) that must die shortly & may die suddenly; and who are hastily following our Fathers to the grave, and would be following them to heaven. To day is your learning and working time, your praying and finding time; and you must be working while it is day, the night cometh; redeeming your time & opportunity & advantages. Take hold of Instruction, and keep her for she is thy life. Learn to day lest you die to morrow, and that you may be fit to die then if God should call you away. Learn diligently for there is no work or device, wisdom and knowledge in the grave whither thou goest. Learn that you may live (by the will of God) and in time teach

others.

others. Learn by your Fathers death to day, that (if God pleaſes) you may one day ſtand in his place, and ſhine in more than his Gifts and Services. Ply diligently your ſacred Studies, that at laſt your holy Spirits may be taken up to the World of light, and death may be but a joyful *Tranſlation* of them——. But I may not inlarge, as I could wiſh, in this *Addreſs* of my Text unto the Schools and the Sons of Learning.

II. I muſt not omit the *other Notes* and Inſtructions, which I ſaid may be of a *more common uſe to us all*, and of a more general concern. I come therefore in the ſecond place to theſe, And

1. IT is the *Lord that takes away* one and another out of this world, and he does it as the Supreme and Sovereign Lord of all. He took *Enoch* and *Elias*, and He *the Lord of Hoſts* takes away every one that dies. The *Agency* and *Regency* of God is eſpecially to be acknowledged in this. Life and Death are the higheſt concern of Creatures, and to be the Lord of theſe is the high glory of God. This is a ſingular thing in his Dominion and Providence, which ſpeaks him to be the bleſſed and *only Potentate*, the *King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*; who tho' called *Gods* on earth yet muſt *die like men*. The *one Eternal Spirit* is the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, and in his hand is the Soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind; and he kills and he makes alive. The Eternal Godhead and power of *Chriſt* is thus exhibited in glorious Viſion, having the

key of Hades in his hand. The God of our Spirits, the Former and Preserver of the Spirit of man within him, he says when our spirits shall *come* into these Tabernacles of flesh and when they shall *leave* the same. As there is no such thing as *Chance* acknowledged in the *Christian Schools*, so least of all in the matter of *life and death*. The minute life of the *sparrow* falls not to the ground without the will and direction of your Father in heaven; how much more is the superior life of *man* taken away by his special will & order.—— We must be sure to give unto the Lord this Glory, *Isa.* 38. 15. *What shall I say? He has spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it. Dan.* 5. 23. *The God in whose hand thy breath is, glorify. Psal.* 42. 8. *My prayer to the God of my life.*

2. THE Lord has appointed the *day and the hour* when he will take away one and another, and the manner and circumstances of every ones departure out of the world are foreknown and determined by God. Our *times* are all in God's hand; the time of our death as well as the time of our birth; for there is a time to be *born* and a time to *die*. God gives to all life and breath and all things; and as he has made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, so he has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of every ones Habitation: when and where we shall be born, where and how and how long we shall live in the World, and when and where and how we shall die. Job 7. 1. *Is there not an appointed time unto man upon*

on earth? 14. 5. *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass.* God has appointed and determined who shall die to day and who to morrow, thro' the whole habitable Earth. All that concerns us living & dying, in time and thro' Eternity, is everlastingly fixed in the Eternal Counsel and Decree of God.

3. HE orders and appoints the *sudden* departure. He says to one *to day thou shalt be with me*, and to another *this night shall thy soul be required.* God takes away some without giving them a day or an hours warning. Give me leave, with but a little strain and force on my text, to draw some Image of a *sudden* decease from the happy pass and change of *Elias.* Some have died in their sleep, and others sunk down in their chair, and had (it may be) no more present sense of death, than if the change of *Elias* had passed on them. Some pious Souls have been *rapt up* into heaven in an instant, or rather taken out of the body without knowing any thing of it, till they have found themselves in the arms of Angels. The great and good and dear to Heaven, die suddenly as well as others.--- Some godly Men have *wish'd* for it as an easy and desirable passage, by the will of God; and have been *denied* it. To others the desire has been *granted*, and been to 'em as *the tree of life.* They have had no *bands* in their death, but have died like *Aaron & Moses* in the Mount of God, (and as the *Jews* speak) had their Souls *kissed* away.——To a Person prepared to die, a sudden death is *no evil.* It may be granted

granted as a favour. Some eminently pious Ministers have died in the pulpit, or as soon as they have left it —. But it is ordinarily a very *awful* thing to Survivors, when their Bereavement comes so suddenly upon them. Nor is a sudden death ordinarily to be *desired*, either for our selves or others. Few are in such readiness for their great Change And it is a great and awful thing to die. What can be done but once, and whereon our Eternal State depends, had need be well done. The wise Virgins need to rise and *trim their lamps* when the Bridgroom comes.--- How *dreadful* must a sudden death be to an unprepared Soul! *Suddenly he is destroy d, and that without remedy.*——Such as have been most prepared have desired (by the will of God) the Opportunity of a *more solemn and formal dying*; having time and notice given them to take leave of their friends, and to leave their dying *Testimony* to the ways and truths of God, and their dying *Blessing* with their families and children. It is a known *prayer*, and may be well made by most, *from sudden death, good Lord deliver us*! But it is a better prayer and needs to be made by every one, *for sudden death good Lord prepare us.* —— We are all liable to it; and where had we been now, if in the night or morning pass'd we had died suddenly! or where should we be to night if when we lye down we should sleep the sleep of death! The *young* and *hail* and strong man may die in an instant, and in the very midst of health to his own and others apprehension. Job 21. 23. *One dies in his full strength,*

ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe & quiet; his breaſts are full of milk, and his bones are moiſtned with marrow.

4. GOD takes away *Prophets and Superiors* ſuddenly and in an inſtant, as well as others. *All Souls* are alike his, all are his creatures. There is no reſpect of perſons with God, nor any diſtinction of men in the caſe of death. We ſee the *wiſe* man dies, likewiſe the *fool* and brutiſh perſon periſh. The Godly and the wicked fare alike very often as to the manner and circumſtances of their dying. And ſo do the High and the low, the poor and the rich. *Job* 21. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge? ſeeing he judgeth thoſe that are high.* "God takes away ſuperiors from "our *heads*, inferiors from our *feet*, and equals "from our *arms*. Kingdoms and Provinces, Colleges and Churches, Schools & Families have their *Heads* taken off, taken away at what inſtant God decrees. The Prince is ſuddenly called *down* from his Throne, and the beggar is as ſuddenly *carried up* by Angels from his dunghil. God calls for the *Teacher* to day, and for the *Scholar* to morrow. God ſummons the King as the ſubject, the Maſter or the Servant; for they are all on a *level* before Him and death. Alike they *ly down* in the duſt and the worms cover them; till in the Reſurrection the upright ſhall have the *Dominion*.—— Yet to us *now* the Providence and Judgment of the great God appears more awful in the ſudden deceaſe of *Superior* perſons; and God requires of us a more ſolemn attention to his mind and meaning therein. *Iſai.*

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3. 1. *For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hoſts, takes away the ſtay and the ſtaff, the judge, the prophet, the prudent & the ancient.* Men that have been lent to the world for public and extenſive Bleſſings, and who in their reſpective Orders have been the honour and delight and riches of their Country; yea and like *Elijah* the chariots of Iſrael and the horſemen thereof. When *ſuch* are taken away we owe a very reverend attention to the voice of God in his ſovereign Providence, a ſerious conſideration of it, a profound ſubmiſſion to it, and a very pious improvement of it.--- So were the *Schools* and the Church *moved* at the tranſlation of *Elias the firſt*; and ſo were *Chriſt* and his Diſciples moved at the Death of *Elias the ſecond*, the *Baptiſts* death.

5. WHEN we *know* the will of God concerning us or ours, it becomes us to *hold our peace*; I know it, ſaid *Eliſha*, hold you your peace. Let *all fleſh* learn of him to be *ſilent* before the Lord under ſurpriſing Providences *Silence* is ſometimes loud praiſe; yea ſometimes *Praiſe is ſilent. Pſal.* 65. 1. *Silence to thee.* God ſees and hears the humble and reverend Tho'ts of the affected heart. *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Stand in awe and commune with your own heart, and be ſtill. Aaron* under a very ſudden and awful bereavement, a double bereavement, *held his peace*, and greatly honour'd God before the Congregation of *Iſrael. Job* ſat a great while in wondrous ſilence, and in the duſt, and his friends with him before the Lord: At laſt he ſpake ſomething amiſs, but afterward he laid his hand again upon his mouth. *David*

was

was sometimes dumb with silence when his sorrow was stirred. *Psal.* 39. 9. *I opened not my mouth because thou didst it.* In this he was a Type of *Christ*, who was afflicted and he was oppressed, yet he opened not his mouth. Surprising and astonishing Providences may seem to command our silence and strike us dumb. Lighter grief may more easily speak and freely vent it self. We should be silent sometimes, that we may the better *think* and search into the meaning of Providence. Silence may assist our composure and sedateness, and help us to possess our Souls in patience, being a check upon affections and passions. By a time of wise silence we may the more suitably *open* our mouth at last for the glorifying God. For we must not, cannot be *always* silent under sorrow. While we are musing the fire should and will kindle: As *David's heart grew hot within him, then spake he with his tongue*: And he spake with equal fervency and wisdom, *Lord make me to know my end, and the measure of my dayes what it is, that I may know how frail I am; behold thou hast made my dayes a hand-breadth and my age is as nothing before thee.*—— We must adore and acquiesce. It is the Lord, said *Eli*, let him do what seemeth him good. And good is the Word of the Lord, said *Hezekiah.* Profound submission is our reasonable duty. *Psal.* 46. 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* So we shall best *digest* our grief, *keep* our hearts and lips from sin, and *not charge God foolishly*, but discern & do our instant and immediate *duty.* —— But I come to a

6. And laſt Note, HOW *good* is it for us that *We know no more*, what ſhall befal us to day or to morrow? *Knoweſt thou that the Lord will take away thy Maſter from thy head to day*? What a ſtrange ſort of queſtion wou'd this be to any of us? Our anſwer muſt have been, ---How ſhould I know it? Secret things belong to God. How ſhould I know, or why ſhould I ſeek to know the things which the Father has in his own power. The heart of the Eternal and Immortal King is *deep*, and he is inviſible. And who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who ſhall intrude into the Secrets of Heaven? It is neither *poſſible* to know, nor *lawful* to enquire after. Shall any dare to break thro' the *Bounds* that God has ſet about the *Mount* to gaze into the thick darkneſs? What would he meet with there but the lightnings & death! *Shall the gates of death be opened to thee? or haſt thou ſeen the doors of the ſhadow of Death?* Have we been in *that land of darkneſs, as darkneſs it ſelf? and the ſhadow of death where the light is as darkneſs*? --- Ah, how little do we know what the Lord may do unto us or ours 'ere this day or night paſs over! knoweſt thou what a day or a night may bring forth? or what ſhall be on the morrow? Where thou or thine may be before the evening or the morning arrive? --- What knoweſt thou but that the Lord will take away thy Parent from thy head, thy Conſort from thy arms, thy Children from thy knees, thy Servants from thy feet? What haſt thou any leaſe of, ſo much as for a day? any right in, or any power to retain? Art thou ſure of thy own life,

life, one day or hour longer ? For what is your *life* ? it is even as a *vapour* which in a moment vaniſhes away ? And what is all *fleſh* ? but as a *wind* that paſſes away and cometh not again ! They are but as a *ſleep*, as a watch of the night, and as a *dream* when one awaketh ! *So man lieth down, and riſeth not again till the heavens be no more.*

YEA how *calamitous* would our whole life be, did we foreſee the certain period of our life and of the lives of ours ; and the whole train of evils that poſſibly may ly before us and them ! This proſpect would call for *Abrahams* faith to bear it ; and when he had it *lo an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him* ; Gen. 15. 12. and the *fowls* came down upon his divided Sacrifices, ready to *devour* them & him ! he had eno' to do to *drive* them away. But how *diſtracted* then would our devotions and other duties be, did we poor feeble creatures ſee but a few years before us ? Our days and nights would paſs in viſions of frightful ſpectres. We ſhould deter our ſelves from entring into pleaſant Relations, which death would ſo ſoon diſſolve. Children would loſe the Joy of their living Parents, and Parents wou'd ſee the Sentence of death upon their playing or blooming Children. The moſt furniſh'd and accompliſh'd wou'd not be *call'd*, or wou'd not *go*, into Offices of truſt and weight ; and even *Princes* wou'd be forſaken by their obliged Servants. The Sinnews of induſtry and enterpriſe wou'd be cut aſunder, and Men's hands wou'd hang down and their hearts ſink within them and they become

dead as a stone. There wou'd be no need of *signs in the Sun or in the Moon & Stars*, to produce *distress of nations and perplexity upon earth.* Men's hearts wou'd fail 'em *without these* for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming on them.

WHEREFORE let us be thankful to God, and adore his wise Government of the World and us, in hiding from us the things that wou'd but disorder and unfit us for doing the duties & tasting the true pleasures of life; and let us improve our happy Ignorance of what shall be on the morrow, unto industry and diligence in the known duties of to day.

IN a word, It is for the *honour of God* to conceal the matters of futurity, and it is for *our benefit* to be kept from looking into the dark before us. It is to keep us humble and wise, depending and devout, praying and resigning to the God of our life, and trusting in him and praising him. It is to keep us living by *faith, whereby the Just do live.* By it they *hasten unto*, and by it they *wait* for the Coming of their Lord. By it they embrace the *Promises* afar off, and as to the *Events* of Providence they accept them all as good and faithful, and find them all working together for their future and everlasting good.

——BUT I must break off——. I doubt not but your hearts have gone along with me thro' the whole *Discourse* into the sorrowful *Occasion* of it, the lamented sudden Death of the learned and pious Mr. *President* LEVERETT, our worthy and

and beloved *Maſter*, whom the LORD has lately taken *from our heads* —— Ah, how little, my dear *Brethren*, and you the *Sons* and *Hope* of our Land,--- how little did we know or think what the Lord was doing or had done unto us, the laſt ‖ *Lord's day* but one, when in the morning he was found dead and *gone* from us in a ſoft and gentle ſlumber, without any notice to himſelf or us! O the ſurprizing ſtroke of Heaven on us! *Our Maſter gone*, and not accompanied with one parting prayer and cry to heaven for our ſelves and him! *Gone*, and not one of all his learned pious Sons about his dying bed, to ſee him expire Great and Good (by the will of God) as he had lived, and to have had a Bleſſing from his dying lips! O awful Providence! which loudly bids us *hold our peace*, and be dumb in ſilence. Hath not the *Potter* power over the clay? and the *Immenſe Eternal Spirit* over the Soul which he has made! *If he cut off, or ſhut up, or gather together, then who ſhall hinder him? Who will ſay to him, What doeſt thou? Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath diſpoſed the whole world? If he ſet his heart upon man, if he gather unto himſelf his ſpirit and his breath; all fleſh ſhall periſh together, and man ſhall turn again unto duſt:* —— *In a moment ſhall they die, and the people ſhall be troubled at midnight and paſs away, and the mighty ſhall be taken away without hand.*

‖ May 3. 1724.

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BE *Silent* therefore, O all flesh, before the Lord. Only after a decent and awful silence, let us open our mouth to *bless* the glorious *Former & Preserver* of the spirit of man within him, *who made Him that Soul* he was, and who continued him *so long* unto us, and *us'd* him so far in services to his Name among us. Thanks be to the *Father of lights*, with whom is no variableness nor any shadow of turning, and from whom *this* and every good & perfect Gift comes down, who made him *that shining light* he was so long in *School* and *Common wealth.*

FOR *forty* years together he has *shone* in *this Place* and in the eyes of *this society*, in near a *Meridian* lustre. For his *Morning*, which we do but just remember, was so bright that it seem'd to us even then the *Noon* of life; and the College and Country greatly *rejoiced* in his early and uncommon light. Near forty years past *we* saw the College flourishing under his wise Instruction and Government, his faithful Watch, his diligent and authoritative Inspection. We then beheld him esteemed highly in love and honoured greatly by those that were his *Fathers* in Age; and as for *us* we reverenc'd, fear'd and lov'd him as our Father, and as if he had been then grey in the Presidents Chair. *The young men saw him & hid themselves, & the Aged arose & stood up.* Then *men gave ear to him, and waited and kept silence at his Counsel. His glory was then fresh in him and his speech dropped upon us.* He reprov'd, rebuked and exhorted us, and we trembled at his *frowns*; for he never did it without a fault on

our

our part; Or if he prais'd and *ſmiled* on us for our doing well, we ſcarce believ'd it.

WHAT God hath *ſince* made him to us in one Chair of honour and another, I need not relate; your eyes have ſeen it. —— Moſt of the Men of Letters, in Church or State among us, have been *bro't up at his feet*; and moſt of them I ſuppoſe are ready to *riſe up & bleſs* his memory. —— But he is ſuddenly *taken up* from our Head, and we are *following* apace; both *Miniſters* and *People*, *Tutors* and *Pupils*, and You his dear and mournful *Family*, (with whom we come to mix our tears and pour out our prayers) --- We are all following, --- and how *ſoon* or *ſuddenly*, God only knows. His admonition and inſtruction therefore this day unto us is that, Mat. 24.44. *Therefore be ye alſo ready: for in ſuch an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh!* And that, Mar. 13. 33, 34, 35. *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping.*

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